 Briefing Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Briefing Note Number:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>22\textsuperscript{nd} January 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title: Fire and Rescue Service Member Champions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To | Performance Working Group |
---|-----------------------------|
Issued By | Assistant Chief Fire Officer John McVay |

Summary

To provide the Performance Working Group with an overview and expectation in relation to the proposed reinvigoration of Fire Member Champions to support, assist and provide constructive challenge to the Council’s Fire, Rescue and Resilience Directorate.

Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contacts</th>
<th>Phone number</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John McVay</td>
<td>07917305746</td>
<td><a href="mailto:john.mcvay@cumbria.gov.uk">john.mcvay@cumbria.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reference documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference documents</th>
<th>Ref. number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BRIEFING NOTE DETAILS:

Introduction

This Briefing Note (BN) provides an overview of the National Fire Reform programme and associated expectations for Fire and Rescue Services. The BN also considers the role of Fire and Rescue Member champions and how these important positions can be further developed and embedded to assist in the provision of positive support and constructive challenge in driving forward the effectiveness and efficiency of the Councils Fire and Rescue Service in Cumbria.

Background

In May 2016 the then Home Secretary the Rt Honourable Theresa May outlined the Government’s fire reform programme. This programme of change aims to transform the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) in England building on the previous success of the work FRS’s have carried out in relation to prevention and improving the safety and well-being of the public and ensuring closer working between the emergency services. One element of the reform agenda will focus on the workforce, including greater diversity, looking at how FRS’s of the future better reflect their communities. Another key area of improvement required will be to ensure all FRS’s demonstrate greater transparency, accountability and scrutiny which are essential in a modern day front line public service organisation.

As part of this fire service transition, a new independent inspection system will be implemented. It has been made clear that Fire and Rescue Services across England will be expected to improve accountability and transparency, and this will be supported by an independent inspection of each FRS. The proposed approach by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) is to undertake inspection across the 45 UK FRS.

A further vital element which will be analysed as part of any future inspection will be the political scrutiny involved regarding the ongoing work across FRS’s. It is this scrutiny whereby Elected Member champions can support and sponsor the work of the Fire and Rescue Service and also offer constructive challenge to ensure the right decisions are being made for the benefit of the Council and the Communities of Cumbria.

Role of Fire Member Champions

Member Champions are elected Members who act as an advocate or spokesperson for a specific area of the Council’s business. The main responsibility for each Member Champion is to encourage communication and positive action over the issue they represent. The role of a Member Champion complements the responsibilities of the respective Portfolio Holder, the Chairs of Scrutiny Committees and other elected Councillors with designated responsibilities.

A Fire Member Champion would keep a focus on issues in relation to:
Raising the profile of the Councils Fire and Rescue Service

Constructively challenge the work and associated performance of the Fire and Rescue Service in relation to work streams involving Prevention, Protection and Response.

Keep abreast of the range of work ongoing across the Fire and Rescue Service

Foster the engagement of a wider range of Councillors on topics and issues in relation to the Fire and Rescue Service.

Promote effective communication and positive working relationships both within the Council and amongst partners, stakeholders and community groups.

Promote the positive work that is being undertaken within the Fire and Rescue Service at local, regional and national level.

Encourage co-operation and be able to engage with all staff across the Fire, Rescue and Resilience Directorate.

Understand and express the opinions and priorities of the council and the Fire and Rescue Service.

Be sensitive to Council priorities and their broader role as a Councillor.

Reinvigorate the role of Fire Member Champions

In order to ensure Fire Member champions are identified and to develop the understanding of the role and importance of the position. A request will be forwarded to each of the Local Committee meetings for an opportunity for each of the respective Operational Commanders who are responsible for:

- Allerdale and Copeland
- Carlisle and Eden
- Barrow and South Lakes

To present to the Local Committee about the role of a Member Champion and to identify the Elected Member who will be the named Fire Member champion.

Parameters of the Fire Member Champion Role

All Fire Member Champions must act reasonably in their role and recognise and work effectively within the political management and working arrangements of the Council. A Member Champion cannot make decisions and must not commit the Council’s Fire and Rescue Service in any way or manner that could be interpreted as being contrary to established policy and practice.
Summary

In order to support the ongoing improvement, preparation and scrutiny, a request will be forwarded to each of the Local Committee meetings asking for the opportunity to speak with Elected Members to reinvigorate the role of the Fire Member Champion. This will enable a greater level of support, challenge and overview regarding the ongoing work across the Fire and Rescue Service in Cumbria. This additional level of scrutiny will provide support and evidence in relation to the forthcoming inspection which is planned to take place in the Spring of 2019.

For further information contact:

John McVay
Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Cumbria County Council
Fire and Rescue Service

john.mcvay@cumbria.gov.uk

Mobile – 07917305746